



Lady Death





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CONTENTS PAGE

LADY DEATH #1/2

The story for your enjoyment

LADY DEATH LIVES ON

A candid discussion with Lady Death's creators

ARTIST'S SKETCHBOOK

We give you a look inside the creators' drawing pad

1

14

20

We at Wizard are extremely proud to join Brian Pulido, Steven Hughes, and all the good people at Chaos Comics, in bringing you this very special *Lady Death 1/2* issue. I'm sure the final result will overjoy people who are already fans of the woman who seeks to destroy all life on earth, and send the converted looking for more.

By the time you read this, chances are *Lady Death* will have spent nearly a year on the Wizard Top Ten Comics list, and there's a reason for that. It doesn't take a genius to know that when you've got the perfect combination of a fantastic story, art, and characters, you're going to get your money's worth and more.

But go and read the story from the opening passage to the closing words it's 100 percent solid. Also, check out our in-depth interview with the creators of the *Lady Death* saga, and enjoy the exclusive sketchbook art, available only in this issue.

Gareb Shamus

The Big Cheese

TO KNOW HER STORY
IS TO KNOW A WOMAN
CURSED.

SHE'S THE QUEEN OF ALL
THAT IS DEAD AND DYING,
THE INCOMPARABLE,
UNFORGETTABLE...

Lady Death

I WILL NEVER
WALK THE EARTH
AGAIN UNTIL THE
LIVING ARE
EXTINISHED.
HE SAID.

LLICIFER,
FATHER OF
LIES. HOW
LONG HAS IT
BEEN SINCE
HE CURSED
ME?

EONS.

I REMEMBER
THE LAST TIME
I SAW YOU
MOTHER...

THANKS TO MY EMISSARY
"THE EVIL ONE" I AM CLOSER
NOW THAN EVER TO MY GOAL
OF MEGADEATH.

WHAT WOULD
MOTHER THINK
OF ME NOW?



AFTER I VANQUISHED
LUCIFER, I TRANS-
FORMED HELL INTO
MY REALM.



IF THE LIVING
WERE TO
DIE, I WOULD
HAVE THEIR
GRAVES
WAITING.



I WANTED TO GIVE
HER PEACE.



YET I HAD UNFINISHED
BUSINESS TO ATTEND
TO. THE PRINCE OF LIES
USED MY MOTHER'S SOUL
TO MANIPULATE ME.



HER SOUL -- SUCH
A KIND SOUL --
WAS OUT THERE, IN
THE ENDLESS
GRAVEYARD.



A
CATHEDRAL?
CURIOUS...



GATHER ONTO ME
ENERGIES OF
DARKNESS AND
GATHER ONTO ME
SO I MAYBE
ILLED!

GATHER ONTO
ME, NEXUS OF
ALL THINGS, SO I
MAY SILENCE
THE RULER OF
THIS REALM,
LADY DEATH!

NICCOLO!
TO THINK
HE WAS MY
LOVE IN
LIFE.

YET HE CHANGED,
BECAME PART OF
MY FATHER'S
FINAL ARMY.

WHAT GOES ON
HERE, NICCOLO?
I THOUGHT YOU
PERISHED!

BEFORE YOU GET
IDEAS, HOPE KEEP
IN MIND YOU MUST
BE WORTHY TO
PASS INTO HEAVEN.

BUT ENOUGH CHIT
CHAT, GIRL! YOU HAVE
SOMETHING I WANT--
LUCIFER'S POWER!

I'VE BEEN BUSY, HOPE. THERE
IS MUCH TO DISCOVER. FOR
EXAMPLE, THIS-- THE NEXUS
OF ALL THINGS. WITH THE PROPER
SPELLS, ONE CAN TRAVEL
TO PLACES ONLY IMAGINED.

HERE IS HEAVEN'S
GATE. TEMPTING
ISN'T IT?

FSH

oom

MY
SWORD!

JUST BECAUSE YOU
HARNESS LUCIFER'S
POWER DOESN'T
MEAN YOU CAN
WIELD IT

SSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSS

SSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSS

KACHING

KACHING

AFTER ALL,
THOUGH YOU WERE
LORD MATTHIAS'
DAUGHTER - HE
KEPT YOU DUMB!
YOU HAVE NO
EDUCATION!

YOU HAVE NO
INSIGHT INTO
THE INFINITE!

YOU'RE AN UNEDUCATED WENCH, AS IT SHOULD BE WITH ALL WOMEN!

CRACKLE

CRACKLE

YOU WERE CONTENT TO PLAY THE VICTIM! AND NOW YOUR POWER WILL BE MINE!



I RECALL OUR TIMES TOGETHER. YOU WERE THE WIDE EYED INNOCENT! THE ABUSE YOU SUFFERED BY YOUR FATHER'S HAND-- AT FIRST I PITIED YOU.

THEN I REALIZED YOU DESERVED IT!

TIMES CHANGE LITTLE SORCERER. I'VE LEARNED MUCH.

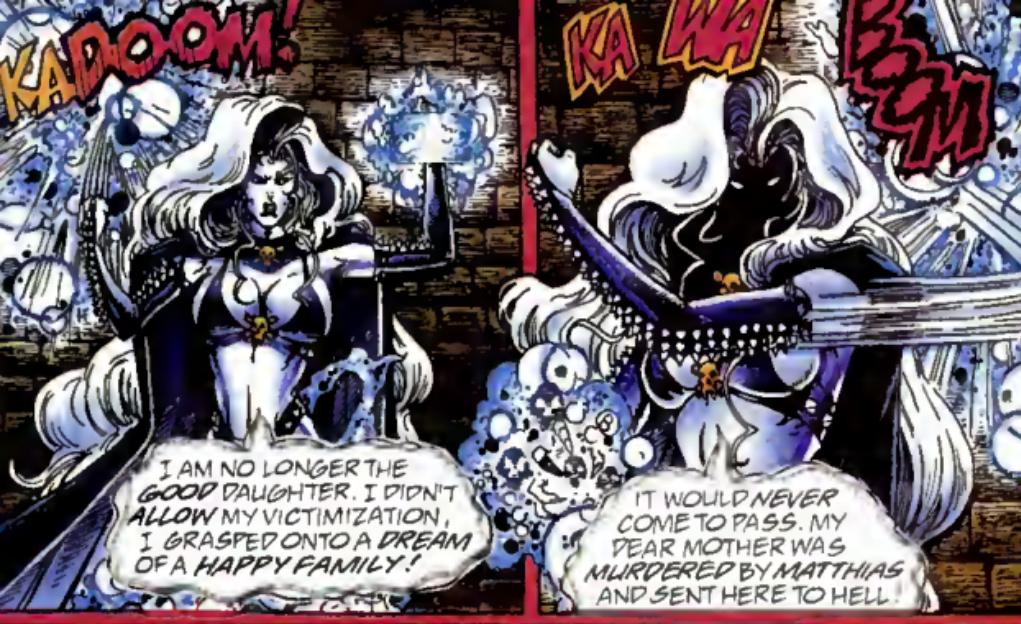
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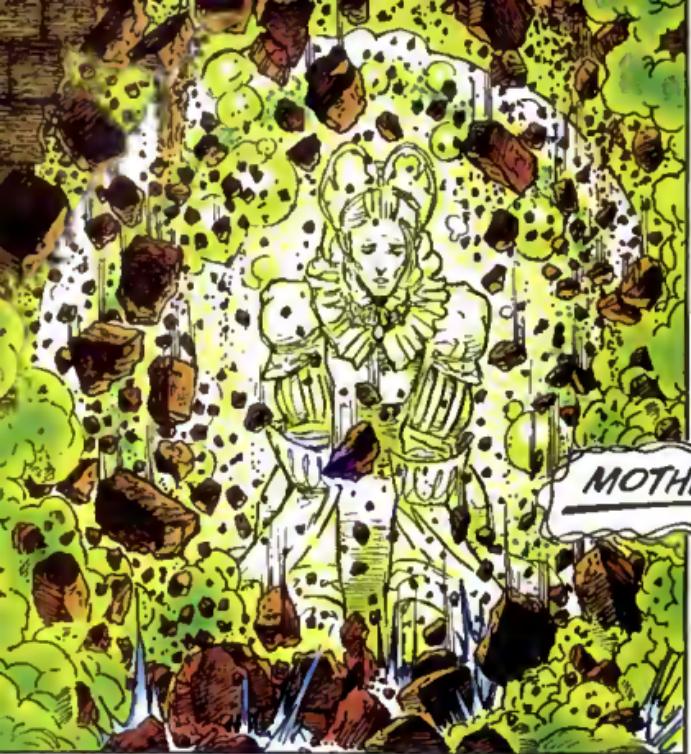
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SSHHHHHH

Ring

Ring





PLEASE HOPE
REMEMBER OUR
TIMES TOGETHER
BY THE POND. WE
WERE HAPPY.

REMEMBER
MATTERS OF
THE HEART!

THE FACT THAT
YOU EXIST AFTER
MY CONQUEST OF
LUCIFER IS
MERELY AN
OVERSIGHT

KRAKK

AAAAAAA!

THIS IS MY
REALM. AND I
WILL DO WITH
IT WHAT I
PLEASE

CHINGA

AAAAA
AAAAA

THE NEXUS
NEEDS BALANCE!
YOU DON'T
UNDERSTAND!

BURP!
BURP!
SQUISH!

AS FOR THE
MATTERS OF
THE HEART... YOU
DON'T HAVE A
HEART,
NICCOLO.

SPLAT!



GOODBYE
MOTHER

FAREWELL

TO KNOW HER STORY IS
TO KNOW A WOMAN
CURSED.

FID

Lady Death Lives On



LADY DEATH & EVIL ERNIE™ & © BRIAN PULIDO

Hope's story has only begun, say creators Pulido, Hughes, and Jensen.

By Craig Shultz

Lady Death burst onto the comics scene in the 1991 mini-series *Evil Ernie: Youth Gone Wild* #1, but it wasn't until her own mini-series appeared in January 1994 that she generated the excitement and attention her creative team hoped she would. They had become convinced that it was a long shot, though, so they were nearly as surprised as the retailers who got caught empty-handed.

"We worked on the concept for a year before she premiered," relates creator and writer Brian Pulido. "And we got a great reception when we showed her to people at the 1993 San Diego Convention. So we had high hopes."

Wary retailers shied away from the book because orders were due just as the market was suffering from product flooding last year. The high cover price brought on by a chromium cover didn't help, either. "The market's demands battered some of the excitement out of us," Pulido admits. "We were unsure what kind of response she would get."

Needless to say, response was good. In fact, the book flew out the door across the country. "When people flipped out for it, we knew *Lady Death* was receiving the reaction we'd hoped for," he says. "But it exceeded our expectations at the time, for sure."



Writer/Creator
Brian Pulido

In *Evil Ernie: Youth Gone Wild from Eternity Comics*, *Lady Death* appeared in Evil Ernie's fantasies to encourage the deranged title character to kill as many people as he could in her name. "All this death for me? How sweet," she coos to Ernie as his rampage begins.

The three-part *Lady Death* mini-series outlines the character's origin and motivations. In it, a medieval girl named Hope renounces her humanity so she can follow her evil father into Hell, where he has gone to battle Lucifer for control. Hope seeks revenge for the hideous death her father delivered to her mother and lover, among many others, in his quest for demonic power.

Along the way, she encounters Cremator, blacksmith to the Lords of Hell, who forges a sword for her needs and presents her with a chest of clothing. Lucifer originally had given the chest to his lover Purgatori, who vanished eons ago. Hope then abandons her civilian identity in favor of that of *Lady Death*.

She demands that Lucifer return

her to her life on Earth, but Lucifer refuses and snarls, "As long as the living walk the Earth, you will never, ever return home to Earth!" With that said, she begins her mission to exterminate life on Earth so that she can someday return there.

"Lady Death is a blast to write," Pulido says. "I see her as an underdog character. Yes, she's powerful, and yes, she's a goddess, but her story is valid for a lot of folks. She's been traumatized, but she prevails despite everything being against her. She's kind of an inversion of the basic heroic myth."

*"There are a lot of superpowered women, but they don't take the total stand that *Lady Death* does. Consequences and cause and effect don't really matter to her. Her goal justifies her means, and she takes that to the bank every time."*

— Steven Hughes



Artist
Steven Hughes



Colorist
Jason Jensen

Artist Steven Hughes agrees. "There are a lot of superpowered women, but they don't take the total stand that *Lady Death* does," he says. "Consequences and cause and effect don't really matter to her. Her goal justifies her means, and she takes that to the bank every time."

The team tried several versions before arriving at *Lady Death*'s ultimate look, Hughes relates. "We started out with a teenybopper look," he says. "That didn't really work, so we went [in] the other direction, trying one that was heavier and more mature, about 35 years old. We decided we wanted her more svelte, so we went with a middle ground of about 23 years old."

Although well aware of the female portrayals of Death at other companies, Hughes didn't look to them for inspiration. "We wanted her to be as voluptuous as every guy's dream," he says. "I think the other companies' versions make the point that Death doesn't always have to be horrific, and we agree with that."

The final design for her costume—such as it is—follows sketches Pulido provided to Hughes in early discussions. "I punched it up to make her more desirable, but I didn't steer far away from the original idea," Hughes notes.

And, while her physical form definitely won't be changing, her costume will be. "Like any woman, she can change her mind about what she



wants to wear at any time," Hughes says. When Hope opened Purgatori's chest, she unlocked an entire wardrobe of outfits, he explains. "It's all at her beck and call, and she can make new costumes appear whenever she wants a change."

Change is definitely in the air for Lady Death, as her next big adventure has already been mapped out. It begins in February, when the first issue of the four-part *Lady Death: Between Heaven & Hell* hits the stands. In that monthly series, the lady will be facing off against Lucifer's old flame Purgatori, as well as other familiar faces.

"Lady Death is going to go through all types of changes in this series," promises Hughes. "She has many challenges ahead. [The battle with] Purgatori will be a turning point in her life, and it will focus her attention on how strong she is and how she uses her judgment. She's smart, and she'll take matters into her own hands. The outcome will not be pretty."

Evil Ernie: Revenge, the four-part mini-series which began in October, has a Lady Death subplot that will lead into her *Between Heaven & Hell* mini-series, Pulido explains. "Steven and I agree that events in the *Evil Ernie* story have to be accomplished to affect the Lady Death mythos before her next story can be told."

But couldn't Lady Death's story be told at a faster rate for all her eager fans?

"We don't want to saturate the market with something that's not so good," Pulido says. "We'd rather do less of a better thing," Hughes agrees. "Putting Lady Death on a monthly schedule would be doing her a disservice. We don't want the desire for Lady Death to wane."

The two relate the concept to movie-making, in which the sequel to a popular film follows the original by a year or more. That analogy comes naturally to Pulido, whose background

A depiction of Ms. Death by George Pérez and Mark McKenna.

includes service as an assistant director for a variety of videos and commercials after receiving a degree from New York University's film school in 1986.

"My visual background helps the comic book presentation," he says. Hughes adds, "Our books have a very cinematic flavor. You sit back, turn down the lights, put on some music, relax, and take a walk on the wild side."

It also extends to the coloring, with both men pointing to colorist Jason Jensen as a key ingredient in the team. Says Jensen, "For most of the books, I usually read the script prior to beginning my work, to get a feel for it. It helps to set the mood."

Atmosphere is critical to Lady Death, because of the medieval tone and the combination of dark, disturbing nights along with bright, flame-filled underworld settings. "There are lots of light sources in the book," Jensen says. "There is always a glow on Lady Death."

The coloring also aids the storytelling aspect of the book, which can appear deceptively simple, he adds. "The storytelling is very straightforward, very easy to follow, but there's a lot going on," he says. "It's very cinematic in that way. And the book would lose a lot of that simplicity and mood if it were in black-and-white."

To keep eager Lady Death fans from storming the Chaos! castle doors before February, the team has created a host of ancillary items. First up is a 50-card chromium Lady Death card set, which hit the market the third week in September. It features cards by a variety of hot artists, including Steven Hughes, Adam Hughes, Greg Capullo, Jim Balent, William Tucci, and Joe Linsner.

Following that in November will be an all-chromium poster depicting a charged-up Lady Death standing in a graveyard. The 19- by 27-inch poster will be limited to 10,000 copies and run for \$29.95. Also in November, the *Evil Ernie: Youth Gone Wild* paperback will be reissued. And in December, the two-issue micro-series *Detonator*—a creator-owned title from Pulido and Hughes, with coloring by Digital Chameleon—will be released with a Bad Girl gallery in the back of the first issue, picturing Lady Death along with *Detonator* characters Mindbender and War Witch. A gallery in the second issue features Lady Death poses along with two other *Detonator* heroines, Stiletto and Roulette. Also on board are a second Lady Death Swimsuit issue (with a to-be-announced shipping date), as well as a fully painted, cold-cast Lady Death statue designed and sculpted by Clayburn Moore, retailing for \$125, with a March or April shipping date planned. Finally, another sequel is in the works for Halloween '95, with a promotion that, Pulido says, "will stand the industry on its ear. We're anti-hype here, so you know if we say it, we mean it."

Considering how the team has lived up to fans' expectations so far, it looks like there's a long and healthy life ahead for Lady Death.

Lady Death Checklist:

- Evil Ernie: Youth Gone Wild #1-#5*
(Eternity Comics)
- Evil Ernie: The Resurrection #1-#4*
(Chaos! Comics)
- Evil Ernie #0* (Chaos! Comics)
- Evil Ernie Special Limited Edition #1*
(Adventure Comics)
- Lady Death #1-#3* (Chaos! Comics)
- Lady Death Commemorative Edition #1*
(Chaos! Comics)
- Lady Death Swimsuit Special #1* (both velvet and standard covers, Chaos! Comics)
- Lady Death #1/2* (Chaos! Comics & Wizard press)

To come:

- Evil Ernie: Revenge #1-#4* (October 1994)
- Detonator with Bad Girl Gallery*
(December 1994)
- Lady Death: Between Heaven & Hell #1-#4*
(beginning February 1995)
- Lady Death Swimsuit Special #2* (TBA)
- Lady Death's third mini-series* (October 1995)

←
Lady Death gets a little peed at her pal Evil Ernie in *The Resurrection*.



Artist's Sketchbook



Right: back in 1990, Brian Pulido brought lead to paper and Lady Death was born. This preliminary version later gave way to the diva of darkness.



Though looking for a face, she was still curvy, oh so sexy, and her lingerie was out of this world.



Even under the worst
conditions, Lady
Death finds a
moment to exhalt
her pleasure.



Professionally known
as the "rough", the
background drawing is
a general sketch
depicting composition,
scale, and perspective.

This drawing may go
through a series of
changes before the
penciler, inker, and
colorist finish off the
final artwork. Unlike a
dozen others, this piece
was lucky enough to
find its way to the
printed page.



They make quite the couple.

BLACK
TOP
BACKG.

THE
ART
CONTIN



The cover is considered to be the most important piece of artwork in the entire book. For any artist, it's there where they want to show their wares. The background sketch of a future cover may soon be appearing on a rock at your favorite comic book store; look for it.

BRIAL
THIS A
COVER
FOR
#2

BACK:
DS 2
—



We all agree that Lady Death looks awesome, but these sketches must give way to the last step before color can be added. Once penciled the inker steps in and defines light and dark strokes. Although the pages could be published at this point, it's the colorist's job to give them life.